

PEACE AND WAR



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# PEACE AND WAR

BY  
*Charles* CH. RICHEL

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY  
MARIAN EDWARDES



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J. M. DENT & CO.  
29 & 30 BEDFORD STREET, LONDON  
1906

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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION . . .	1 ✓
II. CRITERION OF PROGRESS . . .	3
III. MISERY CAUSED BY WAR . . .	5 ✓
IV. ADVANTAGES DERIVED FROM WAR . . .	11
V. BAD EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCE . . .	12 ✓
VI. PASSIONS IN WAR . . .	16
VII. COURAGE IN PEACE . . .	23
VIII. WITNESS OF HISTORY . . .	25
IX. TESTS OF SUPERIORITY . . .	37
X. SURVIVAL OF THE COWARDLY . . .	43 ✓
XI. PROGRESS IN PEACE . . .	46 ✓
XII. COST OF WAR . . .	53 ✓
XIII. ARGUMENTS FOR WAR . . .	59 ✓
XIV. EVOLUTION . . .	66 ✓
XV. FUTURE OUTLOOK . . .	69
XVI. EDUCATION ON PACIFIC PRINCIPLES . . .	75
XVII. RECOIL FROM BARBARISM . . .	86





# PEACE AND WAR

## I

### IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION

So rapid is their advance, that events in the social world are apt to leave the preconceived ideas of philosophers in the rear. Hence the pacific movement which, for some years past, has been making considerable progress, and is likely before long to become even more extensive, has received but feeble support from philosophy. It owed its initiation to politicians and philanthropists, and they it is who are helping to develop it.

With all due regard to the opinions of men such as Leibnitz and Kant, not to mention the names of yet profounder thinkers, on the subject of perpetual peace, we are bound to admit that psychology in general has hardly allowed itself to be sufficiently interested in this question. Has this arisen, we may ask, from indifference or scepticism—but after all, what matter? The main fact remains, that progress is being made in every direction, and it is of little moment to know to whom we owe the work.

Nowadays, however, when the question of peace and war among human societies has taken up its position as one of the most important of our social problems, it behoves us to ascertain on what scientific basis we may found an opinion.

We shall hardly be expected to treat this question with entire impartiality. Our own mind regarding it was made up long ago. Many times over, and indeed wherever opportunity offered, we have defended the cause of peace, as a matter both of justice and necessity. We do not intend here, however, to invoke the aid of sentiment, or to insist on any social or political urgency. The point to be discussed is whether, in view of the psychological condition of man, and of human society in general, a state of unbroken peace is possible, and, furthermore, desirable.

## II

### CRITERION OF PROGRESS

WHATEVER moral theory we may adopt, it is equally certain that to any one of us a system which does not take into account the happiness of the greater number is quite inconceivable. A system of ethics which involved the unhappiness of the majority of mankind is so palpable an absurdity, that there is no need to bring forward arguments in support of a counter-proposition.

Progress, which, more or less, runs parallel with morals, may be defined as the amelioration of the physical conditions of the human race; or, in other words, less poverty, less disease, and fewer tears. And since vice—and I include under this heading gambling, debauch, drunkenness, theft, lying, and idleness—brings poverty, disease, and tears in its train, it follows that the amelioration of physical conditions is co-relative with the moral progress of the individual. A society therefore where the lot of every member is less harsh to-day than it was yesterday, and is likely to be less harsh again to-morrow, may be considered as advancing along the path of civilization.

Let us picture a society in which every individual



member is happy, and which is so conditioned that, benefiting by the triumphs of a steadily progressive science, each succeeding generation enjoys an increase of this happiness and well-being. We have before us a society in a state of progress.

But now imagine, on the contrary, a society where the people grow daily more wretched, suffer increasingly from cold and hunger, are decimated by disease, and are incapable of attaining to a deeper knowledge of the universe. We have here a society in a state of decay.

The conclusion, therefore, at which we cannot fail to arrive is that we are bound to help towards the furtherance of this happier condition of society. It should be the programme of every citizen, the hope and aim of every government.

### III

#### MISERY CAUSED BY WAR

So far all parties are agreed, nor, indeed, is disagreement possible in face of such self-evident truths. The theorist does not exist who would aspire to such an unheard-of ideal as that of the *unhappiness of the greatest number*. It is when the question arises as to what may rightly be defined as happiness or unhappiness for man that opinion becomes less uniform.

It needs but a glance to realize that a state of war is little calculated to aid in the furtherance of earthly happiness.

The slaughter of the battlefield, with millions of human beings cut down in the prime of life; the agonizing sufferings of the dying; amputations, disarticulations, mutilations, irreparable losses among families, fathers weeping for sons, wives for husbands; hideous epidemics accompanying the march of armies; typhus, plague, cholera, dysentery, which number many more victims than shot and shell; towns taken by assault, or undergoing the horrors of a protracted siege; prisoners dragged along the roads, or left to

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languish in infected casemates; destruction of villages by fire, devastation of harvest fields, bridges broken down; stores, accumulated with long labour and expense, squandered in a few hours; pillage, marauding, robbery, and rape, following in the wake of armies; unspeakable sufferings from hunger, cold, heat, and fatigue; anguish of combatants, death-rattle of the dying, groans of the wounded, agony of two nations looking on while their sons are every minute being exposed to a frightful death—in a word, one great and awful cry rising in despair to heaven.

Such is the balance sheet of the sufferings of war during war-time.

The evil is not diminished in time of peace. Taxes growing heavier every day; a Protectionist tariff, the immediate consequence of war, making life more expensive, death more wretched; menace of bankruptcy; whole populations, as in Alsace-Lorraine, as in Finland, Poland, and Armenia, forced into subjection to a hated conqueror; compulsory military service, perhaps the most cruel of all the inflictions imposed by war; the young able-bodied, industrious man torn from the plough, from the workshop, and condemned to a two or three years' servitude; all the intellectual and physical energies of a great nation diverted from the acquirement of truth.



Such is the balance sheet of the ills of war in time of peace. It is not less odious than the other.

But it may be urged that this is only a one-sided view of the matter, and that, for the sake of justice, the evils which arise from war, and which no one dreams of denying, should be confronted with the benefits that may ensue from it.

Beside the sorrow of the vanquished should be placed the joy of the victor.

To be sure, this is something—but not much. The triumph of victory, however keen it may be, does not suffice to compensate for the cruelty of defeat. Take, for example, a battle during which there was not for a single moment any doubt as to which side would win; the combined pride of all the victors at Austerlitz did not, I imagine, cause the vanquished to forget their despair, nor do I think that the promotions, decorations, and all the honours that were rained down on the victorious army could outweigh the enormous amount of suffering undergone by the defeated forces.

And even on the side of the conquerors were there not also the wounded, the dead? What tears even among the victors!

How many crosses of the *Légion d'Honneur* would be needed to compensate for the loss of a child? Picture the father of a family with ten sons in the army. Would

he willingly sacrifice one in order that the other nine, each one of those nine, might be decorated on the field of battle? And yet this is much what a nation makes up its mind to do when, for the sake of earning a little military glory for some of its sons, it sends others to certain death.

And how, if instead of a battle like that of Austerlitz, where a brilliant victory was won so easily, we take the case of other less decisive battles, such as those of Eylau and Leipzig, where the losses were equal on either side; or others, again, where, although there was no doubt as to the victory, the losses on the winning side were so appalling, as at Waterloo and Sedan? To these may be added those murderous conflicts on a smaller scale—inglorious, incessant, lasting for weeks, for years (for example, the Peninsular War, Thirty Years War); and the long wars, like the Crimean, during which disease slew twenty times as many victims as the fire of the enemy. Surely, from the point of view of the general happiness, the joy of the victors and survivors appears but a sadly poor profit to have gained when weighed with the immense despair.

If we further take into consideration the material benefits which a victory affords, these are of trivial worth when weighed in the balance with the sufferings of the vanquished. In 1871 France had to pay

Germany two hundred millions. Did the delight felt by the Germans on the receipt of this indemnity really counterbalance the amount of toil, poverty, and suffering which France had—for long generations—to impose on her people in order to pay off her war debt? It could, moreover, be easily proved that not half a pfennig was remitted to the tax-paying German as the result of this deceptive shower of gold, and we know what burden this sacrifice has been, and still is, to France.

From the point of view of individual happiness, therefore—and there can be no two opinions on the matter—the evils brought about by war exceed in startling proportion the good derived from it.

War may be compared to an epidemic.

Let a town be ravaged by the plague, and innumerable victims succumb, there will, perhaps, still be intelligent people found to maintain that, on the whole, it has been a good thing for the place. There have been fine inheritances to succeed to; posts have fallen vacant, to the infinite delight of those chosen to fill them; certain industries have prospered (stone-cutters and florists); doctors who signalized themselves by their devotion have received flattering recognition of their good deeds; a few undesirable characters have disappeared. . . . What else they may find to say I do not know, but

I cannot look upon these as serious arguments, and, as with the delights of war, I cannot think it anything but a pastime of the humorist to speak of the benefits of an epidemic.

But enough of this—there are less absurd objections which require to be answered.

## IV

### ADVANTAGES DERIVED FROM WAR

WAR, it is sometimes argued, is undoubtedly the cause of immediate evil, but this immediate evil, however great it may be, is attended by considerable advantages.

1. Personal dignity, courage, the spirit of self-sacrifice, loyalty of the individual to his fellow-citizens—these are brought to their highest perfection in time of war. War everywhere inspires the noblest virtues.

2. War encourages that vitalizing spirit of emulation between nation and nation, without which progress is impossible. An absolute certainty of peace would beget corruption and degradation among the whole body of a nation's citizens.



## V

### BAD EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCE

No one wishes to deny that there are what we term *warlike virtues*. There is perhaps nothing nobler in the whole range of human sentiment than the willingness of the one to lay down his life for the good of all, and a genuine military training, there can be no doubt, tends to develop this devotion of spirit, or at least something analogous to it—courage, and the contempt of danger and fatigue. I may here remark, however, that the military heroism which is brought into play in time of war lies idle in time of peace. Regimental life during peace demands no heroic immolation of self, either from officers or men, or perhaps we should rather say that this self-immolation is put in practice in far other ways: there are no assaults on the enemy, no marchings under fire, no cavalry charges—nothing of this kind.

The obscure duties of an instructor, an accountant, or administrator, have to be fulfilled; there is obedience to superiors, there are orders to inferiors, all to do with tedious matters, attention to appearance, respect for the hierarchy, observance of regulations (even of the most

absurd), taking up the whole of time and thought, to the great detriment of individual energy and initiative.

I have no wish to assert that even in connexion with such paltry occupations as these there may not be opportunity for the exercise of very high and solid virtues. An officer who, in times of peace, performs his duty as instructor well is undeniably a fairly high type of both human intelligence and morality.

If he takes his work as a teacher seriously, he will do his best to bring his regiment into shape as a well-ordered family, to temper the severity of regulations by his paternal counsels, to keep constant watch over the moral conduct of his men, to instil into them the love of country, of justice, and of truth, by setting before them examples which even the simplest among them can understand and follow; and an officer like this commands general respect and esteem: a task of this kind is by no means a commonplace or contemptible one to take in hand. As to the soldier, he is just a pupil, and nothing more.

One might even bring oneself to uphold the idea of an army which was converted into a kind of school of ethics and civism, and to approve of compelling young men of twenty, before entering on active life, to pass through the regimental school; but the army has a very

different rôle to this assigned to it in time of peace, its duty then being to prepare for war. I do not deny that there is an advantage to be gained by bringing young men of twenty together, under a certain amount of discipline, at once paternal and rigorous, compelling them, as it must, in some degree, to a sense of solidarity, while it completes the education of the less instructed, and inculcates ideas of equality and justice—indeed, the subject is of sufficient interest to be worth discussing. But an institution of this kind, more or less similar in system to that in force for the Swiss troops, has nothing in common with the military system actually in existence.

We have no right to delude ourselves. This just and paternal and moralizing regiment, with its soldier-pupils and officer-professors, is simply a myth, a matter of theory rather than of fact. As the case stands, men who join the army do not improve in the way of personal morality.

The regiment is a school neither of chastity, sobriety, of truth nor of disinterestedness. I call to witness all those who have been through it.

The principle of militarism, therefore, cannot be defended by pleading the necessity of a large school for the teaching of morality and discipline, for practically the regiment is nothing of the kind. Whether it be

a question of the army of <sup>any nation</sup> (France or Germany, of England or Italy) during the twentieth or any preceding century, in either case we find it, as a fact, a school for the degradation rather than for the elevation of morals.

We sum up, therefore, with the assertion that the army in time of peace is an institution calculated to injure the morals of a country, and in order to rectify this, such deep-rooted reforms would be necessary, that when reconstituted it would be an absolutely different institution to the existing army.

And further, would there not, after all, be something not a little absurd in maintaining that an army ought to be worked exclusively on pacific principles? An army is a machine set up for purposes of war, otherwise the whole thing is nonsense; and who would be found to stand up and plead for an army which never intended to go into action?

## VI

### PASSIONS IN WAR

IT is left us to consider how matters stand in time of war. Are we right in saying that man's noblest virtues then obtain a higher pitch of excellence? I, myself, have no hesitation in declaring that I do not believe it. At this very moment we are looking on at the sorrowful and terrific spectacle of two armies hurling themselves against each other with equal bravery. We see Russians and Japanese in their furious assaults, rushing to meet their deaths, examples on either side of indomitable courage. Rarely has the perfect indifference to death been carried so far. But, whatever respect I may feel for these unhappy men, I cannot bring myself to think that in this fury and fierce doggedness human virtue has reached its apogee. Is every ideal of man only to lead to this—that, without fear or hesitation, we should fall on our fellow-men to see how many it is possible for us to kill?

At that rate, the Japanese of former times, who, after declaiming a fine piece of poetry and some elevated maxim, ripped themselves open in presence of their friends, represented a much higher form of ideal; for



they, at least, only killed themselves, without having previously tried to massacre their fellow-creatures. I have a proper admiration for the courage of the wolf that will attack a living prey capable of defending itself, and of giving as good as it receives, but it is not a courage which I should propose to hold up as an example. If an officer points to a fort on some steep, surrounded by barbed wire, and bristling with guns and rifles, and says to his men, "Go," I appreciate the splendid courage of these unfortunates who, without a moment's hesitation, climb to the assault . . . but my admiration excited by these heroes is not unmitigated, for, behind this magnificent display of courage, I see a whole background of mingled folly and animosity.

Moreover, why should we go on preaching this superannuated idea of the contempt for death being the *summum* of virtue? As it is miserable to fear death, so is it legitimate to cling to life. Contempt of danger is only so far of worth in that it is a triumph of the will or of passion over the instinct of self-preservation. In itself it is of no merit, and only becomes meritorious in consideration of the cause that has evoked it. Highway-men, criminals, assassins, murderers, risk their lives at every moment; their courage, real though it is, does not, however, suffice for me to declare them heroes. Heroism implies that courage has been employed in a

noble cause.) As I read of Xerxes or Alexander, Cæsar or Napoleon, leading thousands of men to death, these brave fellows, who lay down their lives for their master, inspire me with pity rather than admiration. Their valour to me is superb, but I cannot forget that despotism gains by it, and I regret that these gallant men do not turn against a tyrant that makes sport of them, instead of allowing themselves to be sacrificed for him.

Consequently, courage in itself is a virtue, but a virtue which may be put to good or bad uses.) Moreover, it is among the commonest of virtues. Soldiers are rarely cowards; and as to the courage shown in the exercise of their trade or profession by miners, fishermen, doctors, sick-nurses, firemen, policemen, magistrates, and engineers, it is too much a matter of everyday occurrence to call forth superfluous praise. For my part, I am not inclined to lavish encomiums and applause on a doctor who, during an epidemic, has not deserted his post, or on the fireman who has not run away from the fire for fear of scorching his face. And yet, in these cases, the heroism, far from aiding in a bad cause, has been entirely useful, and instrumental in saving human lives.

War develops courage. That is understood. But side by side with the virtue to which it gives birth, what

evil instincts does it not let loose? J. de Maistre, one of the apologists of war, declares that the youthful hero retains his feelings of humanity even in the midst of carnage. Fine words, but nothing more than words. The youthful hero, on the contrary, takes his enemy's life into account as little as his own. A recital of all the cruelties committed in the name of war and recorded in history from ancient times till now would be but a series of similar and nameless atrocities.

T Did not the German Emperor give the order "No quarter" to his men at the beginning of the recent war with China? And was not this barbarous order carried into effect? How many Chinese prisoners were taken? The number of these prisoners has never been accurately fixed, for the simple reason that *no prisoners were taken*. (The Russian soldiers amused themselves by tying the Chinese together, two and two, by their pig-tails and throwing them into the River Amur, looking on with enjoyment at these picturesque drowning scenes.) These facts are notorious, for not being considered subjects for censure, nobody has taken the trouble to deny them.

T When once an honest, harmless peasant has been sent off to the wars, with a good rifle over his shoulder, his mental condition becomes that of the savage, who believes in nothing but strength, and is quite ready to

make bad use of it, with whom it is, indeed, a matter of pride to do so. This is the true military spirit—the worship of strength, in other words, force. There is no army that does not pillage, more or less. Is it not fair that when in a friendly country the combatants should receive some recompense for all the trouble and danger they have gone through? And in an enemy's country—less scruple still.

The soldier in the field has his own special views on this point. He is courageous, and he risks his life : it is his duty as a soldier. But as to being humane, or showing respect for other people's property, that is another matter. Whether they be the armies of Cæsar or Napoleon, of Gustavus-Adolphus or Cortez, instances of savage cruelty are so numerous that we refrain from citing them. The armed man becomes a veritable wild beast. Woe to the vanquished ! exclaimed our ancestor, the aged Brennus, to the terrified Roman senators. Woe to the vanquished ! It is the one and only law of war, and this inhuman sentiment runs like a shudder along the ranks of the whole army in the proud hour of victory.

There are, however, exceptions ; some, truly sublime. But these exceptions rather confirm than contradict this undeniable fact, that the soldier in the field has grown callous to the pain and misery of his fellow-creatures.



The spirit of solidarity which binds the men to one another is also often quoted, and many a moving anecdote, many noble and beautiful incidents recur to me. But then, again, what acts of hideous selfishness may we not put beside them! What indifference, what carelessness, in face of suffering and death, among the onlookers, unmoved and pitiless, who are thinking only of themselves! We should have time for naught else, however, were it incumbent on us to commiserate with all those who fall. All things reckoned, the sum total of unrelenting egoism terribly outbalances that of self-abnegation and devotedness. Of this, any one may soon be persuaded who has watched the manner of living and thinking among the men engaged in any large manœuvres, and this while peace is in full swing. Each man for himself, that is the first commandment, and if, here and there, traits of loyalty and comradeship appear, they are soon swamped by the overwhelming stream of merciless egoism which submerges all that stands in its way.

As to discipline, it entirely disappears in time of war. This fact is undeniable, and one can make a pretty good guess what armed men, whether winners or losers, will be about when discipline has relaxed its hold on them. All the sanguinary instincts of the animal nature are given free rein, all the barbarity, part of the old inheritance left us by our ancestors, comes to the front in full



force. And this is more especially the case when the enemy is a feeble one; a body of soldiers, provided with excellent arms, will not behave any more humanely towards natives armed with bamboo sticks and assegais than the ferocious followers of Cortés and Pizarro. All our colonial wars are the terrible development of the inexorable psychological law that man, once given strength, will make bad use of it if left to himself. To persuade us to believe that a superior moral education, the climax of our civilization, has co-operated in engendering these infamous things—cruelty, bestiality, obscenity, cupidity—is truly a sinister mode of jesting.

To sum up, if we make out a balance sheet of the various feelings and passions to which a state of war gives birth, we find that certain very real virtues (indifference to danger and death, increase of personal dignity and the sense of honour) find place side by side with the worst instincts of humanity (violence, brutality, cupidity, and egoism).

But it is not sufficient to have established this fact, since certain writers, although recognizing more or less the evil aspects of the military spirit, still affirm that these warlike passions, taken as a whole, are less despicable than those which accompany a peace-loving disposition.

## VII

### COURAGE IN PEACE

To be of a pacific disposition, however, does not imply a lack of courage—a truth which needs only to be stated and requires no proof. An aggressive and bellicose nation, all ready armed for war, is not any braver than a nation inclined to peace.

(The peaceable Boers, rough, uncultured peasants as they were, displayed high military virtues during the course of the cruel war which cost them their independence;) and one might multiply the examples of races who are peaceable by nature and at the same time exceedingly brave.

Courage is not confined to the army. Have not civilians ever been called upon to show that they too are capable of heroism? Does any one imagine that because a man has neither sword, uniform, or rifle, he has no occasion to exercise his courage? The spring of individual energy does not dry up even in a society composed entirely of civilians. The sailor on the merchantman, the miner in his pit, the aeronaut in his car, the doctor and the sick-nurse in the hospital, the man of science in his laboratory, the fireman surrounded

by the flames, each has occasion in turn to give proof of his valour.

If the only reason for allowing war was the opportunity it gave for the development of personal courage, I really do not see why we should not amuse ourselves by starting a few epidemics and fires, so as to give the doctors and firemen the chance of performing a fine heroic deed. It would be a capital school of valour for a town if a large fire were lit every day and the women and children exposed to the flames in order that the firemen might give proof of their courage. The suggestion will raise a smile perhaps, but consider a moment: is it not absolutely identical with that of the friends of war, who give as the astounding reason for their defence of it that it is a school of courage?

## VIII

### WITNESS OF HISTORY

HISTORY has also been brought forward as a witness against the pacific races.

The Romans, that nation of warriors, have been compared to the peace-loving Chinese, who are opposed to warfare. But are we really asked to give serious consideration to such arguments as these? (The Chinese are a totally different race to the Europeans, and one cannot justly compare two civilized nations which differ from one another in every particular—in dress, religion, food, and shape of skull.) To affirm that the Chinese are corrupt and brutalized because they have been a pacific race is as childish as if we were to attribute their degraded condition to their plaited pigtails and narrow eyes. (It is, moreover, a fact that, however peaceably disposed they may be, the Chinese exhibit a contempt for death which amazes the European soldier; and this is one proof the more, to be added to many others, that it is not necessary to be warlike and military to have a supreme indifference to death.)

*Chinese*

The Romans were men of war, and the splendour of Rome was founded on her military achievements.

In the first place, however, we cannot profess an unbounded admiration for the Roman genius; secondly, other non-military virtues (good government, justice) contributed to Roman supremacy. There is surely a moral anachronism in wishing us to return in spirit to the times of Horatius Cocles, or even of Cato. Evolution has been at work since then throughout human society, and we have better things to do than resuscitate the sanguinary, implacable, and avaricious temper of a citizen of ancient Rome.

To conquer the world, to bring the whole universe into conformity with our own institutions, and force it to adopt our language, and this as the result of bloody wars waged in turn with all our neighbours, can be contemplated as an ideal for France by those only who are victims of alcohol or insanity. It was, indeed, the dream of the Romans, realized at last, after oceans of blood had been shed during four centuries of warfare, by the final establishment of the Roman Empire.

To know a peace such as the Romans then enjoyed—well and good; but a peace founded on ruins: *ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*. By all means let our children read accounts of Roman fortitude as models of fine literary Latin, but let it be understood that they are not to take them as a guidance for their own conduct. Modern society is more complicated, more tolerant,



more humane. The nations which surround us are not barbarians, such as were the Dacians, the Germanic tribes, and the Parthians, but sister nations, on the same level with us, and co-operating in the same way as ourselves towards the general advance of civilization among the whole race of humanity. Who shall say how far the declamations of orators were responsible for calamitous issues during the period of the Revolution, and of the Empire, by instilling the idea of universal empire, *Regere imperio populos*, into the minds of the people?

If a comparison is to be drawn between the pacific and the warlike races, the nations chosen for the purpose should be on the same level of civilization. There are the Swiss, for example, who are neither aggressive nor warlike by nature. They have scarcely, if any, standing army, and they are not perpetually haunted by the hideous fear of impending war. And yet we do not find them more corrupt than their neighbours, the French and Germans, both of which nations have to bear the burden of compulsory military service, as well as of crushing taxes for the maintenance of a powerful army, with the added prospect of some approaching and terrible struggle. In spite of all this warlike preparation, the morality of Germany and France does not appear to be on a higher scale than that of Switzerland,

and although it is not possible to choose as to which among the nations the prize of virtue should be awarded, it seems, as far as one can judge, taking the Swiss on the one hand and the French and Germans on the other, that the advantage would not fall to the more warlike races.

M. Brunetière, who does not fight shy of a paradox, has somewhere stated that, if we had no war to fear, and no occasion to develop the military spirit, mercantilism and cupidity would everywhere reign supreme, and that the citizen's whole ideal would be to retail colonial and other products on the most profitable conditions. This is not, we must own, a very exalted ideal, and it is to be regretted that the necessities of our earthly life do not permit every human being to devote himself to the search after truth, the cultivation of art, the worship of the beautiful, and the exercise of a virtuous self-denial. But, alas! we have to live and to work for our living. Since the time when Adam was expelled from his earthly paradise the sons of Adam have been under the dire necessity of earning their daily bread by the sweat of their brow. But there is this difference between a warlike and a pacific people, that the former, instead of working, fight in order to obtain forcible possession of the fruits of other people's labour. The one is engaged in commerce with the

colonies, cultivating the fields, starting fresh trades, working the mines; the other organizes itself into bodies for the purpose of pillaging the storehouses, the fields, the workshops, and the mines, and of seizing what others have worked for. The villager who has ploughed and sown his ground in the hope of a harvest that will bring food for himself and children, is not, certainly, a being of a superior order, or of any supernatural virtue. He is just a simple peasant, eager for gain and circumscribed in idea, but withal industrious and honest after his fashion. His horizon is limited and his views narrow; nevertheless, take him all in all, he stands on a higher level of morality than the highwayman. The latter has a haughty contempt for work, for servile trade, and prefers shooting at travellers and policemen. The effort made to suppress this kind of occupation, and to replace this profession of bandit, very military in its way, by the less dangerous one of peasant and labourer, is a sign of social progress. Some day, perhaps, it may be within our power to set higher aims before men than the accumulation of some scanty savings or the purchase of a morsel of ground. In any case, however, it is less immoral to be engaged in striving after gain by work than to seek it by pillage and warfare.

I go farther, I assert, with all due deference to M. Brunetière, that to me there appears nothing either

immoral or degrading in work. A man of high literary rank may laugh at a poor wretch who sweats and slaves to earn his daily bread, and represent to him that it would be nobler to buckle on some bright harness and arm himself with a sword, and thus equipped to follow in the train of some brilliant general. For my part, I should not dare to give him such advice, and, taking the morals and courage on either side, one with another, I prefer the persevering and useful work of the peasant who tills the ground to all the dashing raids of the soldiers whose work is destruction.

A whole school of young writers, in the belief that they understood Nietzsche, have zealously devoted themselves to the propagation of an almost entirely novel ideal, that of the development by each individual of his own personality, of the power of the *I*. Here, it was thought, was a guiding principle, initiative of a more intense activity. M. Barrès, P. Bourget, and other feeble disciples of Stendhal and Nietzsche, have proposed to us, as a moral law, the worship of strength, of over-mastering force. I can look upon a proposition of this kind as nothing more than a mental diversion, and as that not wholly inoffensive. Strength is neither one with right nor contrary to it—it has no relation with it whatever. It is neither moral nor immoral, but to use an accepted barbarism—amoral. A knife is neither innocent nor guilty. It can be



an instrument of preservation or of murder, according to the hand that wields it. In the same way strength may be excellent or detestable. To be strong, to make the *I* triumphant, well and good, provided it is in the cause of justice and truth. But if it is at the expense of honour or of the life and happiness of others, this triumph of the *I* is only a development of crime, and calls for the interference of the policeman.

Happily, however, these barristers and novelists, these innovators in morals, confine themselves to preaching and advising, and, in private life, remain on good terms with the police and the law-courts; for all this exaggerated bombast about the *I*, which they cry up, has necessarily led to a contempt for the rights of others; a contempt against which the mission of our tribunals is to protect these others. We detect at once that these *énergiques* are nothing more nor less than anarchists; for to recognize one's own will as sole law is, in other words, anarchy. Napoleon was the chief of anarchists, since his own will, or his own caprice, was the only guidance he acknowledged; the *déracinés* of M. Barrès, when they swear over the great emperor's tomb, to conquer Paris, are anarchists in frock-coats; while in the slums of the larger towns there is a seething population ripe for revolt—burglars, hooligans, old jail-birds, deserters, and other birds of



like feather—who put this strange moral theory into practice. Might to take the place of right—this is the law of war; it is also the principle of anarchy. For anarchy may be defined as individual caprice unrestrained by law, and it matters little whether the individual will is isolated, as in the case of the poor fools who throw bombs into public places, or is supported by the wills of a whole subject nation, as were the capricious fancies of Rhamses or Napoleon. It would be heartrending to think that we had no better ideal than this to set before our children. Personal initiative ought to be developed; courage and fortitude should be taught, but with the understanding that energy and courage are still bound to respect the rights of others; otherwise we should only be schooling our children in brigandage and criminality. For an example of exalted moral strength and energy among emperors, it is to Marcus Aurelius and not to Napoleon that we must turn. One was not more effeminate than the other; they were both equally apostles of energy, but in one case the energy was turned to the account of egoism and vanity, in the other it was devoted to the aim of procuring happiness for other fellow-creatures.

To cherish the antiquated idea that the military profession is the only honourable profession, all others being more or less degrading, is to retrace our steps and

return to the ages before the era of Christianity—to the times of Coriolanus and Fabius ; it is forcing society back into the state of savagery of the Redskins and the Negroes of Africa. The Redskins were warriors and hunters ; all professions but those of war and of chase were unknown to them. Africa is divided between the tribes that cultivate the soil and those that raid the territories of their more peaceful neighbours. The latter are the high-class tribes, for they bring other tribes into subjection, and reduce the poor hard-working negroes to a wretched condition of slavery.

Notwithstanding the science brought to bear on its organization, and the scientific perfection of its accoutrements, the military profession does undoubtedly keep alive in the people the same spirit that their predatory life cherishes in the pillaging tribes of Africa.

A democracy founded solely on wealth, as that of the United States, has, I confess, little of the æsthetic to boast of ; and if such was the final goal of humanity, I, for one, should feel little pride in being a man. But it is merely a stage, a transitory phase ; and, at all events, this state of civilization, which begins and ends in wealth, is better worth than the rule of fire and sword, with its huge standing armies, inciting men to robbery and crime, and awakening the instincts of rapine, hate, and murder, which lie dormant in every human being.

I am not here referring to the poor youths who are sent to join the army. Their mental condition is far other than this. They find themselves bound to a prolonged term of hard and enforced labour, of which no one has been able to explain to them the utility. The period of their regimental life is to all of them, with hardly an exception, unbearable, and yet they have to bear it. Their thoughts do not go beyond this. Their chief occupation is to count the days from the moment they joined the service to the moment when they will be liberated. To reach this longed-for day, to be set free a few months earlier, to get back as quickly as possible to their native country, such is the anxious longing of every soldier, whether French, German, or Italian. All conversation centres round this subject—the pole towards which is turned every thought of all the twelve hundred thousand European soldiers now under arms. The military spirit exists only among an exceptional number of volunteers and among the greater number of the officers. But old maids without children, idle women, journalists, lawyers, shopkeepers who have made their fortunes, over-fed hotel-keepers, men of property living at ease—all these, who no longer have to serve, or who have managed to escape serving, are encouraged in their bellicose propensities by contemplating, in perfect safety to themselves, this very army, of

which the actual soul has so little to be called bellicose about it.

The most obstinate supporters of a military system do not, indeed, dare to openly applaud the mere longing for conquest; they affirm that all our warlike preparations should have but one end in view, that is, the defence of the home territory. But here, let me venture to say, there is a singular lack of logic. Necessarily, when there is a war there must be an aggressor. But if every nation was always intent on defence only, there could never be another battle. A war of defence can only arise when there has been previous invasion, assault, injury. To put an end to aggression and conquest, therefore, would be to put an end to all wars of defence. Later on we will consider whether this is possible. As it is, however, we are already in a position to affirm that a nation essentially peace-loving is not less formidable than one given to war, if once its independence is threatened. The United States, for instance—even at the present time their army is only composed of a certain number of volunteers—would make it a hard task for any people, however great their military power, to conquer them either by sea or land. Switzerland, again, in spite of its peaceful organization, would proudly resist any one who attempted to invade it, and we have seen how two hundred thousand Boer peasants were able for two

whole years to keep the English power in check. Holland, the most pacific of countries, successfully triumphed over Philippe II and Louis XIV.

{ The more ardently a nation is attached to peace, the more vigorously will it defend its liberty. War is to it an evil ; even so it is the more determined to fight when attacked. There is therefore no ground for the assertion that in suppressing the love of conquest we enervate a people's courage, for history affords absolute proof to the contrary.

1. { It follows, therefore, that a pacific people, obstinately determined on peace, not only remains uncorrupted notwithstanding, but, if unjustly attacked, can give proof of being capable of the highest warlike virtues.



## IX

### TESTS OF SUPERIORITY

WE have, as we believe, proved, first of all, that war is an instrument of suffering, a human scourge: and secondly, that neither in time of peace nor in the thick of battle does the warlike spirit tend to heighten the morals of the citizens.

We have next to consider whether war, as an agent of evolution, is necessary for the progress of the nations. The question is answered in the affirmative by an anonymous writer in the "Journal des Débats," as a sequel to this absurd axiom: "All the great events of history have been the result of war."

According to Hegel, there is a fatality in historical events, and he further asseverates that the best is confirmed in its triumph by war. Two nations are opposed to one another. It is the more virtuous, the more civilized, the more courageous, the better prepared, that wins the victory. In this way, therefore, war guarantees victory to the more advanced nation, and so becomes in itself an instrument of progress.

The two statements here must be separately considered. Were there no doubt as to this fatality in

historical events, all further discussion would be useless, for it would be plain from the outset that our impotence renders all argument absurd. It would lead too far to enter into debate on this point, and it will be better for our purpose to start with the supposition, which is not an improbable one, that every individual is a certain power in the state, and that public opinion is not entirely enslaved by this idea of the fatal succession of events, but is capable of being directed, modified, enlightened; that it is not impossible to educate a nation with the aid of lectures, books, and schools; wherefore nations can, in a certain measure, regulate their own fate, and every citizen exercise his slight influence on the future destiny of his country.

We will take our stand at this point, for the hypothesis of an irresistible fatality would rid us of all responsibility, and reduce us to silence. To us, however, it seems that we are by no means only spectators of events as they pass, but actors in them as well, and consequently able—each within his own humble sphere of influence—to direct the march of affairs.

Turning to Hegel's second statement: the triumph of the best—analogous to Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest—it is hardly applicable to warlike combats between civilized nations.

In the first place, because there are small nations

which would be inevitably annihilated if war was the arbiter with respect to progress.

Germany, without doubt, is a far larger nation than Denmark. Let Germany be in arms against Denmark—this, as everybody knows, is not an hypothesis, but only too real an historic fact—and there can be no doubt as to the issue of the conflict. But it would be absurd to conclude from this that Danish citizens are inferior as regards morals, intelligence, or courage, to German citizens. It is simply numbers that have secured the victory.

As a fact, in war the victory is not to the best, but to the *strongest*, which is a different thing altogether.

In a duel the strongest is not necessarily the one with right on his side; it is not perhaps even to the cleverest or the most courageous that success is secured. Chance plays a large part in the affair, and it is appalling to think how much larger a part still is assigned to it in battle. What unexpected circumstances may not arise to upset the best-laid plans!

But let us even put aside the idea of chance. Here are two armies opposed to one another, of unequal strength, for one represents a military nation, the other a pacific. In military power these two armies differ considerably, but I do not see why the nation of lesser power should be looked upon as inferior to the other.

Let us for a moment suppose that for some reason or other France had, for the sake of developing her military power, neglected, forgotten, and thrust everything else into the background, while, on the other hand, Germany, confiding in the growth of her population, had directed all her energies towards the encouragement of commerce, industries, science, and arts of peace: in what way would the victory of the French forces attest the moral inferiority of the Germans?

To conclude that one nation is superior to another because it has shown greater military efficiency on one or two fields of battle would be as absurd as to look upon me as inferior to the antagonist who had wounded me in a duel, owing to my want of skill in handling weapons.

The so-called triumph of the best is merely an idea put forward by the conqueror in excuse for his brutality.

And again, these expressions of the best, and the most moral, as applied to the general condition of a nation appear to me void of sense. Nowadays, it is safe to assert, civilization and morality are everywhere about the same: there are but few shades of difference in these matters between the six great nations of England, France, Germany, Austria and Hungary, Italy, the United States. (I do not include Russia, which may be reckoned almost an Asiatic power, for the great mass of its population is only in the rudimentary stage of civilization.)

If a conflict were to arise between any two of these nations, the victory would remain entirely with the side which could boast the most scientific military organization. I should not, however, be convinced by this of the moral superiority of the winning nation over the other.

France was conquered by Germany in 1870-71; it only proved that her army was defective, as the victory of the French would have proved the inferiority of the German army. How truly absurd it would be to infer from a single victory, or even a series of victories, that one of these nations was inferior to the other! If there was truth in this, we should have to class the nations solely according to their military power, and, consequently, the Danes and Norwegians would have to be placed at the bottom of the scale, their armies being but small.

It is a somewhat different matter when war between countries of utterly different civilizations becomes the question. In this case it is clear that the more civilized nation will finally get the upper hand, seeing that it has resources lacking to the adversary to fall back upon. Every class of weapon has been brought to such perfection that no individual courage can stand out against guns and rifles of superior range. That which will in future decide the victory will be neither courage nor numbers, but the greater excellence of the weapons.



A powerful military organization is compatible with a worn-out civilization. For proof of this we have the war between Russia and Japan. The Japanese have, in the course of less than half a century, gradually become, as regards all outward forms, as civilized as Europeans. They adopted our weapons, and then became a formidable military power. But even this will not convince me that the triumphs of the Japanese are proofs of the superiority of the yellow races over the white. It seems, therefore, that as applied to the struggle between two nations, Hegel's principle is nothing but an empty and meaningless truism. (War assures victory to the strongest—that is self-evident; but the strongest in war is not always the best: it is the more numerous, the better armed, the best prepared, and the one most favoured by chance.)

## X

### SURVIVAL OF THE COWARDLY

FROM another point of view it is of interest to discuss Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest. In nature, when two animals fight with one another, it is the more valiant that survives. Disease attacks the weak ones; those of greater vigour and courage live on to perpetuate the race of the courageous and strong. But when there is war between men there is no survival of the finest and bravest, but a survival of the most cowardly. Here the selection is reversed, and conduces to the impoverishing of the race.

First, let it be remembered that the sick and the infirm are exempt from service. Those who have any weakness—such as the deaf mutes, the one-eyed, the one-armed, the cripples, the hare-lipped, the rickety, the scrofulous, the deranged, the lunatics, and the imbeciles—all these diseased and impotent people are well protected by the military laws, and not one of these unfortunates runs any risk of perishing on the field of battle. Those who are chosen to disappear are the halest and heartiest. Robust youths, the hope of future

generations, these are the ones who are declared fit for service.

On the field of battle it is always the same kind of men, according to a well-known saying, who let themselves be killed. Cowards get under cover in the moment of danger ; and whenever there is a perilous expedition to be undertaken, it is invariably the best soldiers who offer themselves for the work. One may safely say, therefore, that at the close of a day's battle the proportion of brave men among the dead and wounded is greater than among those who have not been injured.

And what is true of a single battle is still truer of that long series of battles which constitutes a war, so that at the close of a lengthy campaign there is, proportionally, among the soldiers that return unhurt to their own hearths, fewer brave and vigorous men than among those who have been killed or wounded.

From a biological point of view, long wars are exhausting to a nation and conducive to actual degeneracy. For at last, as during the period of the Napoleonic massacres between 1798 and 1815, all the able-bodied population ends by being annihilated on the field of battle, and the weak and infirm and cowardly are alone left to carry on the race.

This is one of the most serious evils among the innumerable ones which follow in the wake of war.

And, finally, need I remind any one that in time of peace—that sinister peace which means only a preparation for war—syphilis, alcoholism, and tuberculosis, inevitable results of all agglomerations of human beings and of all military institutions, are hardly to be reckoned as especially advantageous for the coming generations, if they are to be taken into account?

## XI

### PROGRESS IN PEACE

LET us inquire ~~further~~ into the statement that all the most important historical events are the results of war, and see if war has been indispensable for the progress of the human race.

Wars of all kinds, civil or otherwise, have up to the present time been incessant, so much so that one can only conjecture along what lines a non-military race of men would have evolved, seeing that humanity has at all periods been given to war.

Nevertheless, it seems unquestionable, that if humanity has progressed, it is not by reason of war, but in spite of war.

That which may rightly be termed human progress has been brought about by the sciences, by industries, letters and arts; the highest intellectual triumphs of the modern world, the discovery of America, the invention of printing, the Reformation, chemistry, electricity, railways, steam-power, theory of microbes, etc., have not been won by force of arms, and it was with works of peace, and not of war, that Columbus, Gutenberg,



Galileo, Luther, Lavoisier, Volta, Stephenson, and Pasteur enriched the world.

Neither are social conquests matters of war. Among the direct consequences of war have been the partition of Poland, the subjection of Finland and of Alsace-Lorraine, and similar infamous proceedings. The English carried on their ravages in France for a whole century; they were at last driven out of the country, but, meanwhile, civilization during those hundred years had been seriously retarded.

The long wars between the House of Austria and the House of Bourbon were the cause of endless misery, and resulted in no profit either for victor or vanquished. The splendid impetus given to the spirit of our fathers by the French Revolution was checked by the insane campaigns of Napoleon, and it is impossible to guess what their magnificent energy might have accomplished, if it had not been turned out of the right way to serve the purposes of an insatiable egotist. The Civil War in America, which led to the abolition of slavery, might also be brought forward here, but that it was in reality an accident. It was nothing less than a necessity, and if the Southern States had given in at once, there would not have been such useless massacre. If Italy secured her liberty by the war of 1859, it must be borne in mind that Lombardy and Venetia had become subject to

Austria as the result of previous wars, so that in the end it was only a reparation by war of what war had brought about.

It is vain to ask ourselves what would have happened if such and such events had not taken place; but, as it really does not appear that war has exercised an influence on any great intellectual movement, and as the works of the chief benefactors of mankind have all been of an essentially pacific nature, and seeing also that war turns the activity of man to purposes of destruction, and not to those of creation, all evidence seems to point to the fact that the progress of the world has been delayed by it. Not that we wish to affirm that no victory can be beneficial in its consequences; but, admitting that it is so, a victory of this kind only adds to the condemnation of war in general, since blood has been spilt in defence of a just cause unjustly threatened.

The human race would have had a very different destiny if Xerxes and his hordes had not been checked at Marathon and Salamis. These two splendid battles—the finest known to history—saved the world. They do not, for all that, make me any fonder of war, rather render it the more detestable to me, for under its crushing weight the world of Greece and its dawning civilization narrowly escaped destruction. Valmy and Jemappes were the saving of France and the Revolution,

but when I remember the danger run by the country, I anathematize war the more, and especially that infamous war let loose against France in 1792 by the allied Powers.

Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon, it has been said, brought civilization along with them in their warlike course. We will see to what conclusion a further inquiry on this matter will lead us.

Alexander led his army as far as the Indus, ravaging and pillaging all the way. Like Rhamses and Sesostris of old, he traversed Asia, sowing devastation as he went, and causing himself to be worshipped as a god. He dies, and the whole vast machinery gets out of joint; his lieutenants, who have grown to be kings, all come to an abject end, and at last nothing remains of all that senseless freak.

Cæsar subdues the Spaniards and the Gauls; at the cost of what rivers of blood we learn from his own cold-blooded recital in the "Commentaries." His civilization of Gaul was effected, as was later that of America by the Spaniards, with the help of treason and massacre. He spread Roman civilization throughout the length and breadth of Gaul; but the benefit did not outweigh the crime.

As to Napoleon, the main characteristic of his achievements was their sterility as far as any benefit was concerned and their fruitfulness as regards evil. Before his

advent France was mistress of the whole left bank of the Rhine; friendly and allied republican States gravitated around the Republic of France as their centre. Whether in Germany or in Italy, the French were everywhere greeted as deliverers: after Napoleon's time they were looked upon as tyrants, and the very name of Frenchman became accursed. Ridiculous monarchies were set up beside us, and in opposition to us. Through him we lost the provinces which had been conquered and won over to the cause of liberty by the Revolution. For more than sixty years the progress of the world was delayed by Napoleon.

One might be inclined to uphold the principle of civilizing war if it were really a matter of imposing a superior civilization on a savage race. Cortés and Pizarro were execrable men; Cæsar was unequalled in cruelty and trickery; the English in India and the French in Algeria have committed abominable actions, and the whole history of these colonizations is red with blood. But still, a less barbarous state of things was finally established on the ruins of the old (I except the Spanish dominion, which was never anything but atrocious), so that civilization generally has perhaps benefited by these wars. For my part, I think that the benefit is more apparent than real; but it would take us too long to enter thoroughly into this serious question—

*The Revolution — Liberty  
The Napoleonic Era — Despotism*



namely, whether the fact of belonging to a more highly civilized country confers the right to commit iniquity. Is it a legitimate act, under the pretext that a nation has neither telephone, analytical geometry, nor compulsory vaccination, to force these benefits upon it with gunpowder and shot? The question would repay a careful study. In any case, however, this argument cannot be applied to wars between European nations when they are on the same level of civilization, and the only result of all these great butcheries is a readjustment of frontiers.

If war has occasionally been to all appearances a means of progress, it is simply because progress has had to arm and defend itself against its enemies. Progress, as every one knows, has had occasion at times to enter into armed combat; but a war of this kind is purely defensive, since the opposing forces fight on behalf of ancient errors and with the desire to stay the march of new truths, so that the latter, under pain of being overpowered, must necessarily have recourse to arms. But is this any justification for war? Does it not again add to its condemnation? Progress is not a result of war; but being attacked and forced to resist, war itself is the only means of defence within its power.

More often than not, however, wars are not carried on for the purpose of settling whether truth or error,



progress or reaction, is to have the upper hand. The actual cause of most of these warlike massacres is always, or nearly always, ridiculously trivial. The whim of an emperor, the caprice of a favourite, the acquisition of a few square half-miles of territory, or more often still that empty abstraction known to diplomats as the balance of European power—these have given rise to all our great wars.

How many poor wretches have been left to rot upon the field of slaughter in order that a Plantagenet or a Capet, a Hapsburg or a Bourbon, should be placed in power—that a Joseph might become king of Spain, a Louis king of Holland!

Such are the great historical events which have resulted from war. Progress has made its way without the aid of arms, and we can but wonder that the armies of plunderers and conquerors have been no greater hindrances to its advance.

## XII

### COST OF WAR

IT does not take long to draw up the balance sheet of war, if we consider it simply from an economic point of view. It costs four hundred millions yearly, and the only economic advantage reaped from it is the support it gives to certain industries: manufacture of arms, of explosives, building of ironclads, making of uniforms and general outfits. All these trades live by war, in the same way as the smaller towns which possess the unique advantage of having large garrisons stationed within them live on war and armies. But this prosperity is only superficial; for it is the state—the whole body of citizens—that pays all the costs.

Moreover, there are certain industries which by reason of their very nature profit by public misfortunes. Chemists, doctors, sick-nurses, and grave-diggers make good receipts during times of epidemics. Nevertheless, the community of citizens would be at a considerable advantage if circumstances reduced these professions to penury. As a fact, wherever there is a standing army, the army (together with the navy) swallows up more

than half the financial resources of the country. We may reckon the services for the present year at £120,000,000, of which 48 millions represent the debt; another 48 millions go for the maintenance of the army and navy, leaving 24 millions for the remainder of expenses. The 48 millions of debt, we may add, means nothing else but the army expenditure of former years; it is the warlike inheritance, amounting as a whole to a debt of 1400 millions, left us by our ancestors.

We may reckon, therefore, that four-fifths of our taxes go to pay off the expenses incurred by past wars and to provide means for those to come. Although this disproportion between civil and military expenses is somewhat less in other countries, the figures as a whole come to much the same. Let us calculate, then, that the citizens of Europe pay in taxes to the state the annual sum of 800 millions. In round numbers 200 millions go to pay off the debt and 400 millions to cover military expenses, which leaves 200 millions, that is, only a quarter of the whole, for civil expenses.

But even this is too low an estimate of the expenses necessitated by war, for it must be remembered that there are 1,500,000 men in Europe under arms. Consider now to what our present state of civilization has brought us: to a yearly expenditure of 400 millions for the purpose of preventing 1,500,000 young men from

working, and, what is more, of inculcating among them a distaste for work.

The defenders of this absurd state of things try to console us by telling us that, by paying these heavy taxes in support of war, we are really only paying an insurance against a military disaster. They protest that we only arm ourselves as a protection against war. Doubtless a judicious mode of proceeding—to prepare for war in order that we may not have to undergo it.

This assertion might perhaps meet with support if it referred to a large nation, which, surrounded by other large, well-armed, and hostile nations, stood alone in its objection to a military system; it would be worth while then to discuss the matter; but the idea is eminently absurd in connexion with the European nations as a body; not less absurd than if all the different departments of France, for the sake of preserving their independence, took it into their heads to maintain a militia, at great expense, to protect themselves from one another, and were to employ their ploughmen, their vine-dressers, their fishermen, workmen, woodcutters, and mechanics, to mount guard along the imaginary frontiers of their particular territory. Surely it is simpler to live in harmony with one's neighbours.

Later on we will inquire how far this universal harmony is possible. Let us for the present merely assert

that it is desirable. There can be no denying that the economic system of the military governments of our day is ridiculous, since if a general amnesty were to be established, this expenditure of 400 millions could be dispensed with. We might then send back all our happy youths to the field and the workshop, to earn their living in independence, instead of remaining to become brutalized under their military harness.

It would be waste of time to pause to enumerate the material benefits which the employment of these 400 millions by a united Europe would confer on the nations; there is scope for every one's imagination in contemplating the results. If we take science alone—science, which is the prime factor in the emancipation of the human race—what could not be done with 400 millions to further its progress?

And this immense sum is consecrated to the uses of an essentially fruitless work, for it is certain that if the nations were once willing to erase from their programme all thought of conquest or warlike enterprises they could dispense with the military system which leads one and another of them to ruin and bankruptcy.

To give ourselves some idea of the colossal error which still continues to exist among human societies, let us for a moment put aside all remembrance of the old tales of hate, and revenge, and national conquests, with



which we have been cradled since our infancy ; let us watch the real drama that is going on : men, of similar race, living under the same conditions, only separated from each other by rivers and mountains, spending the whole of their money and energy, the whole of their talent, in gathering themselves together in huge masses for the sole purpose of destroying each other. And as destruction would go on too quickly if men gave themselves up perpetually to the work, they allow certain intervals, generally of short duration, to elapse between the epochs of destruction, and during these intervals, which they call by the name of peace, they think of nothing but how to make themselves ready for the next period of destruction : may not the onlooker at such a scene feel justified in terming a society so constituted absurd ?

Having lived in the midst of it since our tenderest years, we are less struck by this absurdity ; but the philosopher claims the right of calling this traditional state of things to account. It is the outcome of former barbarous conditions of existence. The anthropophagi, the savage races lived like this ; and so wrapped are we in illusion that we do not know how to liberate ourselves from this sinister past. We are like those unfortunates who track the streets with their faces disfigured by cankerous sores, promenading their hid-

eousness and fetidity, unaware of their own wretchedness : suffering has become a habit with them, and at last they even lose the consciousness of their own devouring disease.

### XIII

#### ARGUMENTS FOR WAR

SURELY we ~~have no~~ need of ~~further~~ argument to convince us that war is an evil. It is an instrument of unhappiness; it debases the morals both of the nation and of the individual; it is to a high degree unfruitful as regards progress. It is a source of ruin and corruption for the human race—an ancient relic of the barbarians. And this great evil, this scourge, more murderous and destructive than cholera, plague, typhus, and tuberculosis, taken all together, can it be combated? Is it some organic fatality weighing upon our miserable humanity? In our desire that peace should be established among the nations are we only at work on wild and chimerical ideas?

As a rule, those who are the champions of war—and there are still such to be found—bring forward the same two arguments in succession. First of all they declare that there are real advantages on the side of war, and when proofs to the contrary ~~(such as I have been endeavouring to make plain)~~ show them the error of this supposition, they fall back on the impossibility of preventing it. War is a necessary evil—this is the final

plea to which they resort. But it is something to have recognized that it is an evil, and that as such it may be put in the category with tuberculosis, alcoholism, prostitution, syphilis, and cholera. Our task at once becomes simplified, for in making it evident that it would be better for the future of humanity to eliminate war and militarism, we commit ourselves to the acknowledgment that all our efforts ought to be directed to the attainment of this end. The question remains whether there is a possibility of realizing this hope for the suppression of war.

The only reason that can be adduced to negative the idea is that up to the present moment there always have been wars.

An ingenuous argument, within the reach of the youngest intelligence : *There always has been war ; therefore there always will be.*

Just in the same way, the people of the seventeenth century said : Deaths from small-pox have always been at the rate of 20 per cent, and therefore there will always be deaths from small-pox at the rate of 20 per cent.

Some have even gone as far as to assert that the instinct for war is inherent in the human race. Darwin has been cited in support of this theory : “ ‘ War,’ said Maurice Spronck to me during a public controversy

which we held on the subject, 'is a biological phenomenon against which neither our wills nor our efforts have any power. There is a perpetual struggle going on among all living creatures; there must, in the same way, be struggle among men. The theory of the necessity of war is a scientific theory, for war is the very law of life.'"

That this is a sophism, we have no difficulty in proving, since the express purpose for which all human societies are constituted is the lessening of those iniquities which are practised by man in a state of nature.

Among the inhabitants of the forests, of the seas and the plains, the weaker are overpowered and annihilated by the stronger. Society exerts itself to protect them.

Incest is the rule among animals. Society proscribes incest.

If an animal commits a crime against one of its own species, or against a prey, it profits by it, and is only the better off for it. Society proscribes murder.

Civilization consists essentially in the suppression of violence and outrage—of individual crimes. If a murder takes place, society is up in arms to punish the offender. There is a code of right, there are laws, a police, and courts of justice. In short, the basis of all social life is this properly organized administration of justice.

To those who are the friends of a government ordered



by nature alone, it must appear supernatural—little short indeed of a miracle—that man should so far have progressed that in one large country forty millions of human beings, with strongly opposed interests, of violent and dissimilar passions, are able to live together without dead bodies being found at every turn of the road, or fire maliciously set to every house, or raids made on every slip of territory at every moment of the day. If the problem of how to make forty millions of individuals live side by side without too many murders has been solved, in defiance of nature's law which insists that every man shall act as a wolf towards his fellow-man, surely it would be an easier task to promote friendship between three or four large nations.

If the law of nature was to be the rule, no society would be possible: the human race would be given up to pure anarchy, each individual following the guidance only of his own caprice, crushing or being crushed, according to whether he were stronger or weaker than others. As it is, this state of anarchy which has been put <sup>to</sup> a stop ~~to~~ among individuals by our police and courts of justice still reigns among the nations.

It is brute force, and not right, which determines between them, and this fact is so glaringly apparent that one cannot but wonder how anybody is found to contest it. To the same extent that we have made progress

with respect to the individual relations between citizens of the same country, we have remained barbarians as regards our international relations.

And if it be objected that the struggle of nation with nation is but a developed form of the struggle of man with man in a state of nature, how shall we account for those other changes in the condition of things which have transformed the natural into the social, namely, the protection of the weak, the punishment of criminals, of those guilty of incest, theft, and murder? The animals possess nothing akin to our civil and criminal laws; and it is to this state of bestiality that some would even wish us to return! We have no corresponding international laws—there lies the whole evil. But this grievous defect in our constitution, from which the whole of human society is suffering, could be remedied without difficulty, for the establishment of international laws would be a thousand times easier than has been the organization of a hierarchical and well-ordered society, in which the family and the person and property of the individual are surrounded by so many safeguards.

And even if we were to take the social conditions of the lower animal—which to me seems wholly absurd—as a model for the organization of human society, where do we find them gathered together in those collective combats which some persons choose to represent as

being in accordance with a perfectly natural state of things? La Bruyère, in one of his famous passages, has told us of some thousands of cats who were gathered together on a wide plain, there to tear each other to pieces with tooth and claw—merely a tale, it is true, admirable as such, and unsurpassed in vigour of recital. It still remains, however, only a fiction, for animals are not such fools as to give themselves up to this kind of useless massacre; it is left to men to indulge in such-like madness. Proudhon, in a work of his on war, worthy of a lunatic, is in the right when he says that it is in this matter of collective wars that man is distinguished from the lower animals. A pitiful characteristic, which Proudhon, poor man! looks upon as a mark of intellectual superiority, as, in like manner, the very prodigious absurdity of war was to J. de Maistre a proof of its divine origin.

The belief that war is inevitable owing to the nature of man has no scientific support; war between nations is a social invention, not a natural phenomenon. It is the struggle between individuals, man with man, even perhaps family with family, which takes place in the state of nature. But it is this particular form of warfare which men, when constituting themselves into societies, firstly and chiefly aim at suppressing. We have no grounds, therefore, for basing our arguments either on

the fact of war occurring in a natural state of society, or on the psychological constitution of man, seeing that wherever societies of men have been formed they have been able by laws, regulating the conduct of individuals, to suppress these bellicose instincts and to bring their members into peace with one another by establishing the sovereignty of right.

The constitution of such countries as France, England, Germany, and Italy—which represent immense agglomerations of men—has nothing in common with anything prevalent in a state of nature, nor, as regards the relations among themselves of these different groups, can we rightly appeal to any natural instincts of man, to which nothing can be more contrary than the organization of these huge regulated machines, that have nothing analogous to them among animal societies.

## XIV

### EVOLUTION

IN my refutation of the astounding assertion that, as there always have been, there always will be wars, I shall not trouble to go into details, for this is one of the arguments which refute themselves, although accepted with so much favour by those of inferior understanding. If we wished for a counter argument, we could bring forward one entirely at variance with the above, and say : There always have been wars ; therefore there will come a time when war will cease ; for history, as a fact, shows us that change, and not immobility, is the law of every society that has existed.

We live in a continual state of evolution, and there is no ground for supposing that international wars will continue when everything else around us shall have undergone change.

To admit that war, which is acknowledged to be barbarous, can never come to an end, is to deny all possibility of progress, to condemn ourselves to look on as helpless spectators, while a desolating evil is allowed to break loose. We know very well what to do in the presence of such plagues as tuberculosis, syphilis, alco-



holism : we have to fight them, and we do it with the legitimate hope of being able to stop or diminish the ravages inflicted by them. We should think and act the same in face of the plague of war, the plague that man has himself created, a plague which is absolutely dependent on man's will, and is not in any way due to the inevitable influence of the elements, such as are storms, tidal waves, or cyclones. It is out and out an evil of our own invention, arising entirely from some defect in our social organization, and which it is our duty, consequently, as it is also in our power, to do away with.

The majority of men have at all times unfortunately been incapable of understanding that all social life is an evolution. Men are so hampered by their actual surroundings that they look upon all change as an impossibility. They never dream but what the men of 1950 will have the same ideas in general that we have, and that society will continue to be constituted on the same principles as now. They cannot picture to themselves that in 1950 and in 2000 everything will be absolutely different to what it is at the present day.

And the greater number of men are, besides, equally unable of imagining what the past was like ; they do not realize that two or three hundred years ago countries at this present moment federate and unified were at war with one another. Lorraine, Brittany, and Burgundy

have not always been united under the same government. They fought desperately with one another, as did Athens and Sparta two thousand years ago, as did also Tuscany and Sicily, Bavaria and Prussia, scarcely less than half a century ago. Little by little the nations grouped themselves together in ever-increasing numbers. The area of peace has been extended from century to century; ~~Germany is a united country, and so is France, so is Italy; and yet Germany, France, and Italy~~ were formerly all three divided up into several distinct nations, occupied with destroying themselves and each other by continual warfare. There can be no doubt that this movement towards concentration will continue, and that nations at present separated will in time be joined in pacific federation. The French provinces, for example, formerly autonomous and independent, each engaged in its own private wars, have for the last three hundred years formed part of a unified French nation, all wars between province and province having ceased.

Unable as the generality of men are to imagine a past, or a future, or to conceive anything different to the present, and to the actual state of things, under the tyranny of which they remain quiescent, it is natural that they should hold the ingenuous belief that as things always have been so will they continue.

## XV

### FUTURE OUTLOOK

EVEN the least progressive among the slaves of routine are willing to admit that there will, no doubt, come a day when the mad folly of war will be swept from the earth. But they fix the day of deliverance at a very distant date—five hundred, perhaps even a thousand years hence. At any rate, we shall not see that day, they add. I, on the contrary, am fully convinced that that day is not far off. That men of my advanced years will not live to see the pacification of Europe is probable, but there is no doubt that the younger men of to-day will see the beginning of it; by which I mean that in fifty years' time, if not sooner, there will be no menace of some useless widespread international war weighing on the whole body of a country's citizens.<sup>1</sup>

My reason for believing in the rapid advent of an era of peace is that during the last ten years the pacific movement has made greater progress than during the ten previous centuries. It has penetrated to the consciences

<sup>1</sup> To the friends of large armies, who tell us that it is the army which allows us to live in security, I make answer with Novikoff, that it is only the security of a Damocles.

of the European nations. The idea of a Tribunal of International Arbitration has become universal. Arbitration treaties have been concluded between several of the chief Powers.

That these conventions—Franco-English, Franco-Italian, Franco-American—do not satisfy all our pacific aspirations is obvious; also that these *non-obligatory* arbitration treaties are not sufficient obstacles to prevent the possibility of war. They must be looked upon as premises, as preludes. It is but the beginning, but the beginning of a powerful and general Amphictyonic institution which will establish right as the arbiter among nations, as it is already among individuals.

I cannot enter here into the diplomatic history of the great pacific movement which had its starting-point at the Hague Conference. It will suffice for me to point out that the advance made has been so rapid, so un hoped for, that we have every reason to anticipate for it in the near future a still more considerable progress.

(a) The first theoretic objection—for here it is only a question of the theory, and not of the practice of obligatory international arbitration—is that the decisions of a tribunal of arbitration do not admit of enforcement. Neither is there any power whereby a nation, if unwilling to appeal to the decisions of the tribunal, can be forced to do so; and, in short, this tribunal, unless it had an

armed force at its disposal, would be as entirely destitute of authority as any court of civil justice would be if deprived of its police force.

Let us state briefly our arguments against the validity of this objection put forward on the score of lack of authority.

1. If a general pacific institution came to be actually established, with permanent and obligatory treaties of arbitration, and with a supreme court of arbitration, there would be an end to the military organization of the nations; war would thenceforth become impossible, since no nation would be prepared for it.

2. Up to the present time no instance has been known to history in which the decision of arbitrators has not been considered final, although over three hundred cases are on record of appeal made to arbitration. If the greater number of these were concerned with matters of small importance, there were others again which dealt with affairs of extreme interest, and which led to outbursts of popular feeling. The decision of the tribunal was, however, always respected, since to refuse obedience to the decree of a tribunal of which the impartiality was beyond suspicion would have been equivalent to a barefaced acknowledgment of caring little for justice, and of being in the wrong. Opinion, whether of a nation's people or its government, would be shocked



by such a refusal to abide by justice. It would be useless to make pretence any further of upholding a just cause, and it would require to be well assured of one's power thus to dare to run the risks of war by such open violation of all principles of public right without a show of any possible excuse. One may therefore take it as very probable that by the mere exercise of its moral power the tribunal would compel acceptance of its decisions.

3. A simple and efficacious means might be suggested for securing the enforcement of the arbitral decision, namely, the preliminary deposit of a considerable sum of money as a guarantee of the good faith of the contracting parties.

4. A further suggestion, easy of realization, would be the organizing of an armed international force charged with the duty of enforcing respect to the decrees of the court of arbitration. In Crete, first of all, and afterwards in China, as we know, international armies have been stationed, and there is therefore nothing chimerical in the idea. This supreme court of international justice, therefore, could, to enforce the authority of its decrees, establish a formidable force, composed of an international army, which would replace the armies now in existence.

(*b*) The second objection, and a very serious one also, is that if differences between nations were submitted to

arbitration, many international disputes more or less at present laid to rest would re-awake, and these would give rise to fresh wars, so that this great machine of peace would have for effect only the provocation of more terrible conflicts. What would be the fate of Poland, of Trieste, of Transylvania, of Armenia, of Finland? Should we have to confirm every state in its actual possessions ("Beati possidentes," as Bismarck said), even though in allowing the ownership a sanction was given to the most flagrant violations of justice? or would the chart of Europe have to be rearranged in conformity with the wishes, wholly legitimate, of those populations which have been forcibly annexed.

Undoubtedly a problem difficult to solve, and I understand that there should be hesitation in deciding which alternative to adopt. But why not appeal to the tribunal itself, allowing that it will have all authority for deciding the matter?

Finally, we do not pretend to think that no difficulties will arise. Where there are societies of human beings, with so many strong rival interests, so many violent and conflicting passions, it is impossible that affairs in connexion with them should ever be simple, and we are not so foolish as to imagine that an international tribunal is going all at once to settle every dispute, without dissent, without running perils, without long and laborious

negotiations. But, let the principle of right be once established, the means of adoption and execution are but secondary considerations.

*Fata viam invenient.* The essential thing is the condemnation and abolition of the barbarous, sanguinary, ruinous, and unmeaning process which we call war, for it is a disgrace to our civilization.

## XVI

### EDUCATION ON PACIFIC PRINCIPLES

IN the foregoing pages I have merely indicated the broad outlines of fundamental principles, not wishing in the discussion of the great historical and social problem of war to go beyond a brief philosophical study. That peace is a good and necessary thing, that its institution is a possible and relatively easy matter, and that as a consequence it is the duty of every good citizen to hasten its advent, I have, I believe, been able to set forth.

But what means are we to adopt for the accomplishment of this purpose? In my opinion, there is one, and one only, which would prove really efficacious, namely, education on pacific principles.

We will assume that all the citizens of the different countries were profoundly convinced that of all the evils which oppress mankind, not one was more cruel than war, not one more easily to be suppressed, and that war was the greatest iniquity we had to contend with on this earth; peace would then be the only thing possible, and there would be an end of this long warlike period, of which every human society has been a victim.

Children and young people, therefore, should be brought up on the one simple and beneficial principle that the duty of men is to help, and not to destroy, one another.

Alas! the lesson that has been, and is still being taught them, is far different to this. All the school-books—especially those in use for primary education—are full of admirable and well-worn commonplaces about the love of one's country, while they identify patriotism with the warlike spirit, so that, little by little, the minds of the young become imbued with the idea that it is impossible to love one's country without having a weapon of some kind in the hand, and that the warrior, the soldier, the conqueror, and the ensign-bearer, are incarnations of patriotism, while outside the pale of the regiment the word is but an empty sound. Lamentable error! which becomes complicated with another more serious still, namely, the belief that in order to love one's own country it is necessary to hate every other.

Again, in so-called patriotic works there is hardly a word about the miseries resulting from war and militarism. They extol the high deeds of warrior kings, and conquering emperors, and make no mention of the ills they have wrought—the ruin, the massacres, the iniquitous annexations, and all the gloomy deeds that make up the history of our international warfare. If



anything is said about the friends of peace, it is to treat them as outcasts, to accuse them of want of courage (?), and to hurl reproaches at them as cosmopolitans, internationalists.

It would seem, in reading these books and listening to their teaching, that the foremost duty incumbent on a good French citizen was to look down on other nations, and to acknowledge nothing to be just and equitable for which Frenchmen were not responsible.

For those who strangely style themselves the friends of France there is no such thing as international law, and with them everything is permissible against a foreigner. In ancient times, in Greece, every stranger was a barbarian, and books chosen for primary, often also those for secondary education, are at the present day perpetuating this idea throughout France.

This erroneous view of things must be vigorously combated. Schopenhauer taught us some time ago that there is no such ridiculous vanity in existence as that of people who are proud of belonging to such and such nationality. There is neither glory nor merit in being a Frenchman, or an Englishman, or an Italian, or a German, any more than, in the army, there is merit and glory in being a hussar, or an artilleryman, a light infantryman, or a zouave. Napoleon, when he wished to invite his soldiers to some terrible act of

self-sacrifice, would call to them : “ Remember, you are men of the 4th regiment of the line,” or of the 5th, 6th, or whichever it might be. In the same way, when nations are being urged to attack one another, their leaders, according to whichever side of the Rhine they may be on, exclaim, “ Remember that you are Germans ! ” “ Remember that you are Frenchmen ! ”

The European races are, as a fact, so crossed and commingled, that there is no possibility of establishing any pre-eminence among them ; civilized humanity forms a large and compact mass, which can only be broken up to its infinite harm. If the benefits conferred on the world by such Englishmen as Shakespeare, Newton, and Stephenson were done away with, the whole of humanity would suffer loss, as it would also if there had never been a Leibnitz, a Kant, a Beethoven, or a Goethe ; or again, if there had been no Dante, no Galileo, or Volta ; no Pascal, no Descartes, no Lavoisier, or Pasteur. These famous men, though of different and distinct nationalities, have been, nevertheless, benefactors of the whole human race, and promoters of progress and civilization. To ignore this would be at once folly and ingratitude. One of the first lessons, therefore, to be taught to children is : “ A man is not an enemy because he is a foreigner.” A self-evident proposition, but which, notwithstanding, enjoys the privilege of exciting many

people's indignation. Can there be any greater absurdity than in bringing up the French peasant to hate the German peasant, as if the first duty of the two honest bodies of men, living on either side of the river, was to detest each other? Surely not. They have the same interests : both desire to be left to cultivate their fields in peace and freedom, quit of the military service which carries off the young men, and released from the constant menace of a hideous war which will devastate their lives and property. Such is the ideal of the French, and equally of the German peasant, of the English miner, and the Italian sailor. All workers have an interest in peace, and all, if the truth were known, aspire to peace. With one as with the other, it is the chief necessity, for all war is disastrous, even for the victors ; all preparation for war means ruin more or less.

As history is now taught to children, their feelings of hatred are roused, and their imaginations overexcited.

In Germany they are still told the tale of the devastation of the Palatinate by Turenne, and the teachers say to their poor little scholars, "There is your hereditary enemy." On the other side of the Rhine the children are told of the exactions and crimes committed by the German army ; they listen to the account of the siege of Paris, of Sedan, and Metz, related in such a manner that the spirit of revenge may be kept alive in them.

Everything in our system of education, and in our customs, is calculated to conduce to the one fatal result : the hatred of nation for nation. At Paris there are the avenues of Jena, of Wagram, of Solferino, of Sebastopol ; there is a Trafalgar Square in London ; streets of Sedan and Metz in Berlin ; there are celebrations of the anniversary of Sedan in Germany, festivities of the 2nd May in Spain.

Everywhere, whether in pieces on the stage, in the songs, at the cafés, in novels, in daily papers of every class, or at conferences, and in lecture-rooms, the remembrance of past wars and of all the crimes committed by other nations, is studiously kept alive. Alas, it is but too true that there have been crimes which ought to weigh on the conscience of every nation, for none have been guiltless of them. But all nations have a remarkable facility for forgetting the evils that they themselves have sown broadcast, and growing indignant only over those to which they have been subjected. In a word, the military history of the nations—the only history given in books for primary schools—is nothing but a tissue of underhand dealings, cruelties, and selfish caprices ; and whether in Germany, France, England, or Italy, whenever those of which the nation itself is guilty are slurred over, so as to bring more emphasis to bear on those of which it has been the victim, there will always



be found page upon page of unvarnished description suited to the encouragement of angry and revengeful feelings.

This unfortunate system of education is the result of the radically false idea that the prosperity of a nation is dependent on the ill-fortune of those surrounding it.

Germany becomes enriched ; France is in consequence poorer. A Frenchman discovers photography, and neighbouring nations suffer for it. An Italian starts wireless telegraphy ; it is a misfortune for other nations. If Pasteur discovers a vaccine against rabies, so much the worse for our enemies. If Röntgen discovers the X-rays, every good Frenchman is up in arms.

It is needless to insist further on the foolishness of this argument. In whatever country scientific or industrial progress has its origin, it extends to other countries ; and the increase of one nation's riches, by reason of the very fact itself, inevitably leads to the greater prosperity of others. Does a man of business establish himself in a ruined country or in a flourishing one ?

Everything which adds to the luxury, the well-being, the morality, and the happiness of other nations, is destined to make itself felt by us ; we are forcibly brought to profit by it. Much more than in the time of Seneca are the men of to-day *membra corporis magni* ; and apart from a higher moral consideration, it is to our



interest, if well understood, to wish, not for the downfall, but for the prosperity of our neighbours. One might better understand the pleasure arising from the sight of others' calamities, if the goods to be divided were limited in number. For instance, if there were just a hundred rations for a hundred men, no fifty of these could enjoy extra portions, except at the cost of the other fifty, and patriotism might be excused if it wished to secure these for its countrymen. But, as a fact, the case is just the contrary. Nowhere is there any dearth of cheese, cattle, rice, coffee, fruits, wine, coal, or clothing; if we suffer from anything it is rather from general over-production, which averts all danger of the excess of well-being among one portion of the population interfering in any way with the highest welfare of another. Let the Germans and the English live in luxury, the French will derive nothing but profit from it. No selfish reckoning need enter into the matter, for altruism and egoism are here at one.

It is with countries as with families. The ease of circumstance enjoyed by neighbouring families, far from being harmful to my own, is of service to it, and it is to my advantage in every way that those around me should prosper; for I am a commercial man, and if they are rich they will do business with me, and add to my income. The same argument holds good with nations. The

richer England becomes, the more ready will she be to make her purchases on the Continent, thereby helping to enrich those who are living upon it. The argument is so simple that one cannot but wonder to see it so constantly ignored. Envy and the influence of ill advisers are at the root of the angry spite with which one nation views the prosperity of its neighbours.

Not that we have any grounds for believing that there will ever come that golden age when the interests of different groups of men and classes of society will cease to clash, or when even the various races will have interests in common. Alas! there is no hope that social and ethnical struggles will ever be carried on with placid inoffensiveness on either side. But at least let them not be decided by war; for of all solutions war is the most unmeaning, the most expensive, and the most cruel.

In the event, however, of the classes rising against each other, this civil war would at least have the excuse of being less foolish than an international war. When the English, French, and Russian soldiers before Sebastopol threw their murderous bombs at one another, neither one nor the other knew why they were fighting. But when Protestants and Catholics are at war, the least among the soldiers of either camp knows perfectly well why he is in arms: it is to prevent that one going to the Protes-

tant church, this one going to Mass. It is almost impossible to picture a future that will know nothing of two grades of society with their rival interests—the workers on the one side, the masters on the other—appealing at times to the force of arms to decide matters between them. But a battle of this kind will at least have the advantage over those that now take place in that it will not have been premeditated and provided for by long and painful preparations; the men it brings into the field will all be voluntary fighters, for a cause of which they feel the justice, and not combatants despotically forced into action without knowledge of the reason why.

But the time has not yet come for us to consider how these great social conflagrations which one may foretell for the future are to be avoided. It is the existing evil now weighing on us with which we are called upon to grapple. And, I repeat, there is one way only of grappling with it, and that is by help of a system of education built up on firm and avowedly non-warlike principles. Train children to a sense of fraternity, of solidarity; show them that work is a source of riches and of virtue—a doctrine not difficult to defend—and we have no reason to doubt that, whether for primary or secondary teaching, masters will be found who are capable of instilling these elementary truths into their

pupils. Let them talk to the latter of their native land—for the idea of country is not less sacred than that of family; but let it be of a native land at peace, as of a family at unity among its members. From humanity in general to one's own country, from the country to the family—so the feeling of solidarity grows and becomes more binding. Let it be constantly impressed upon the children that they are to respect justice and right, without calling in the intervention of force and violence for the decision of points at issue.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The renowned Tolstoi, in several of his writings, insists that the crime of war can only be checked by the recruits throughout the different countries refusing to serve. The Gospel and humanity both forbid a man to seek the death of his brother. The young recruit, therefore, should thrust aside the weapon that is put into his hand. If all the recruits of every country would adopt this course, there would be an end of war.

Undoubtedly. But, even supposing such general resistance to military service were possible, would it, we may ask, be lawful? Whatever opinion I may hold as to war, I question if it is my duty to rebel against a law, and that a law expressly decreed by my fellow-citizens, imposing a certain duty on me.

It is a complex question, requiring strict investigation, for opinion holds good on either side. At the present moment, however, it is only of interest from a theoretical point of view, seeing that opposition to service is a matter of conscience to an insignificant number only of our youths. We may perhaps have occasion some day to deal with this formidable problem of social morality.

## XVII

### RECOIL FROM BARBARISM

FINALLY, war and the military organization of our societies represent an old tradition which commands little of our respect. They are relics of the savagery from which not one of us is wholly quit as yet, for it is but a short interval of time that separates us from the ages when man was no better than a wild beast. Our civilization, based as it is on war, is still avowedly barbarous, and the efforts of every thinking man should be directed towards the bettering of its condition.

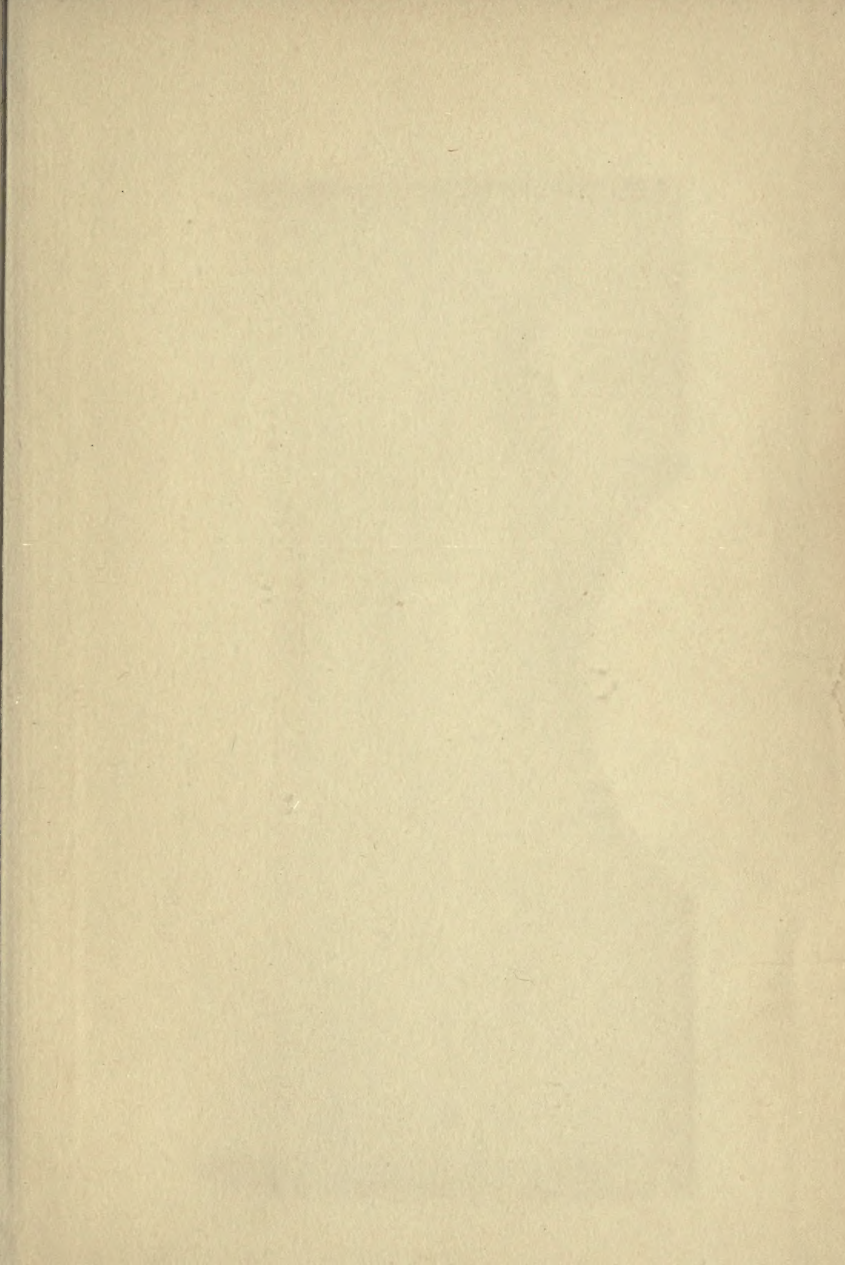
There is no question that, under any circumstances, the final result will be the same, since one cannot for an instant doubt that war, from the mere fact of its absurdity, will not continue to be waged century after century, to remain a perpetual clog on the progress and happiness of humanity. It is certain, absolutely certain, that the day will come when the glaringness of this absurdity will be apparent to the majority of the world's inhabitants. But though the final result may be the same, it will depend on our efforts whether the day of its attainment be hastened or delayed. By making a stand for



peace we may spare one or two generations of men the miseries of war.

In very truth, a splendid task ; nor can I conceive of any nobler one for moralist or philosopher to aim at accomplishing.

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